4: Nobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Lao FL11

CHAPTER III.

Native Tribes of Kavirondo.

101 The *generic* name used of these peoples by themselves is *Ja-Luo*. The Bantu Kavirondo people call them *Awa-Nyuro*. A very common term for them is *Wa-Nilo*.

231 *Modes of subsistence.*—They all live by agriculture. They reside in fixed
291 villages of from ten to fifty huts. Nearly all the villages are surrounded by
301 euphorbia hedges; formerly many villages had mud and occasionally stone walls, but this custom has died out. They breed cattle, sheep, goats, and fowls.

[224] *Hunting and fishing.*—They dig pitfalls for elephants and also spear
226 elephants. They catch large quantities of fish in the Lake Victoria Nyanza by means of large conical wicker traps "*dowo*." The process is as follows:—They have two enormously long ropes; one end of each rope is secured on shore, and the ropes are then paid out into the lake, one rope floats on the surface and from it hangs a fringe of papyrus stalks; the other rope is a ground rope, and is weighted with stones, and the two ropes are connected at intervals. By means of canoes these ropes are gradually brought round in a semi-circle the size of which gradually decreases. The fish rush shorewards to escape from the drawing in of the net, and rush into the mouth of the big wicker traps which are placed in a row in the shallow water near the shore. At the same time the women walk up and down dragging smaller meshed traps in which they collect myriads of tiny fish the size of a sardine. They fish a great deal at night by torchlight. They state that they get the best hauls of fish after rain; in the dry season they catch
[228] comparatively few. Rafts of ambatch wood are used for laying out the net (ambatch is a very light spongy wood growing on the lake shore; it has a prickly
[438] bark). They split and dry large quantities of fish and carry it inland from the lake for considerable distances to sell for grain.

227 Lines and hooks are also used to a certain extent by the Nyakach people and
601 others. The people bordering the lake possess a few dug-out canoes and also a few of the sewn canoes bought from Baganda or Banga.

441 *Bridges.*—They build rough bridges of timber across the rivers when in flood, but not suspension bridges like the North Kavirondo.

264 *Cooking, etc.*—They cook in earthen pots inside their huts, and also in the
252 verandah of the huts. All cooking is done by women. The food is served up in little baskets. The father eats with his sons; they generally eat in a little separate hut with open sides built for the purpose. Women eat separately and inside the house.

372 *Fire.*—They know the use of firesticks but rarely need them, as they can always obtain a glowing ember from one or other of their neighbours.

[pp. 11-25 not processed]

3: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1903 FL11 Lan FL11
Basta Kavirondo FL4
Nandi FL3

B 824 778

The word *Mavundo* in Lo-Wanga means peace, and when peace is made between two tribes, the ceremony, if possible, always takes place at the foot of one of these trees, as the tree is a great peace charm, and the dog, which is slaughtered as part of the ceremony, is generally tied by its neck to the tree.

B 825 751

Among the Awa-wanga, if a man kills a python, it is believed that the snake will return, or possibly that its spirit will return and afflict his children with blindness. Prompt measures must, therefore, be taken to avert this disaster, and he accordingly measures the length of the reptile, and not later than the day following, hews a path through the grass near his village equal in length to that of the snake, kills a white fowl, then sprinkles its blood in the clearing and also pours a little *ubusa* or *wimbi* gruel there too; this acts as a charm to render the python's malignancy futile. Even if a python is seen only, it is considered safe to go through this ceremony. The next child that is borne to the man after killing a python is called *wamoondo* if it is a boy and *wamoondo* if it is a girl; (*mulo* is the Lo-Wanga word for python).

B [553]

B 766 [824]

A most extraordinary custom, which holds among the Awa-wanga and may be mentioned under the present heading, is that if a young girl, a virgin, dies, her female relatives, whose duty it is to bury her, artificially deflower the body before burial; this is always done by the forcible insertion of the pointed bulb of *epidendrum* which cover the immature flowers at the lower end of a growing bunch of bananas. If this is omitted, it is believed that the sisters of the deceased will not be found to be virgins on their marriage; this would be considered somewhat of a disgrace.

B [834]

B 171

It will be remembered that in Mr. Roscoe's account of the Baganda customs,[1] the flower of the plantain or banana plays a certain part in the ritual which is gone through upon the birth of twins, and is there, I believe, used as a symbol of fruitfulness or plenty; possibly a similar idea may, in the past, have had some connection with its employment in the instance now described.

L 765 766 824

There are two curious customs, in which the thorn of the acacia plays a part, which may, perhaps, be mentioned under the heading of charms. Among the Ja-Luo when a person dies, for days, perhaps months after, the whole village wails with great fervour, and at stated intervals according to the conventions laid down for the case. If, however, a barren woman dies, the people of the village at once commence to wail in the usual way, and the brothers and sisters of the deceased proceed as quickly as possible to the village where the death occurred. The first blood-relation of the deceased who arrives on the scene takes a sharp acacia thorn, sticks it into the sole of the foot of the corpse and breaks it off; immediately this is done all wailing ceases at once, nor is it renewed as in the case of an ordinary death. The origin and the object of this strange custom appears to have been entirely lost.

N 787 824

Among the Nandi, when a raiding party is being arranged, the *chemeron* (warriors) proceed to a *laibon*, or medicine man, on ox is killed and the *laibon*,

[1] *Journ. Anthrop. Inst.*, vol. xxxii, p. 25, *et seq.*

II: Herrmann M-9 (ca. 1928)1928 FL11 Loc FL11

§44 couple of women who have come to assist her, support her shoulders. If the woman is afraid or weak, somebody generally a strong woman is called to *thudyo* her, i. e. she puts her mouth close on the mouth of the patient, and blows her breath down the patient's lungs in order to increase the pressure.

No sooner the child is born or one of the assisting women run out of the hut to pull out of the roof a piece of kaffircorn stalk, which is split leaving a sharp edge. This is used to cut the babe's navel after it has been tied off.

[30] If the babe is a boy the Kaffircorn stalk is pulled out of the roof at the side of the fire place of the hut *(Ker omach* — brilliant side facing the hut). If it is a girl, the stalk is pulled out *Ker ahong* — the right hand side. Compare: Burial of children (p. 274).

When the afterbirth has come out the mother takes the child on her lap, whilst somebody runs for a drop of fresh sheepmilk — otherwise never consumed — which the child has to drink. Not until the child has swallowed a drop of this will the mother give the child suck.

§46 Immediately after the birth of the child the husband orders a goat to be killed for the mother, and the pot is put to boil, for the mother has a ravenous appetite. Now word is sent to her father, who will kill a goat for his wife, who comes to see her daughter, bringing some of the meat and fish along.

For no purpose except nature's call is the mother to leave the hut within 4 days, if the babe is a boy. Then she takes the child outside, and a little patch of hair is shaven above the ears of father, mother and child.

852. After 10 days a bull and a heifer are bled, meat and fish is cooked, simsim is pounded and mixed with rendered butter, and the fat of it is to provide a good bed for the inhabitants of the kraal later in the day. On that day the heads of father, mother and child are shaven clean. Then after the woman is smeared with butter and sprinkled with simsim seeds, armlets of a wild plant *(ochol)* are strung on plaited grass *(ogenge)* and creeping grass *(nuothono)* and [30] hung crosswise over the shoulders and under the armpits of the young mother. In the same way she is ornamented with cowrysheils, ordinary beads, beads of multicolular pieces of ostrich eggs *(rek)* and big iron beads.

When the woman is thus ornamented, a boy, her brother-in-law, is called [26] to hold the child. Now an old woman brings *owinjo* (= pounded simsim mixed with rendered butter) and cooked weeds. She kneads a mouthful of the food, making with her thumb a little pit in it *(athwenyo stongo)* which she fills with *owinjo*, then she puts it on the end of a wooden ladle, used in stirring the food, 4 times to the mouth of the mother. The 5th time she puts it with the help of the ladle in the mother's mouth, who is not allowed to touch the food with her hand. After she has eaten this one mouthful, another mouthful is given in the same way to her young brother-in-law who holds the child.

Then meat, fish, blood and other food is brought for the inhabitants of the kraal. That night the father and mother of the child sleep again together for the first time after the birth of the child *(ilgoto imbo nyathi)*.

If the babe is a girl the woman stays in the hut for 3 days, after which the child is taken outside and a little patch of hair is shaven also above

11: Herrmann 36-5 (ca. 1928)1928 FL11 Loo FL11

743 ock in the village and he withdrawn says that the sickness is due to neglect of
787 deceased's grave, and that they have to sacrifice a goat or a bull to propitiate him,
753 then they put some stalks round the grave again by way of a hut, in the doorway
of which they roast a chicken, and some blood of the sacrifice is put in a potsherd
and placed on the grave.

On the anniversary of the death or thereabouts beer is brewed again. Two
769 kwanzwe deceased's sons visit the witchdoctor, who tells him to sacrifice a special
782 cock, e. g. a big black one, or one with an extra toe, or one with very short legs,
273 etc. Until such a cock is found, as indicated by the witchdoctor, the beer will be of
no use. Then the chicken is roasted and eaten, except for one leg which is put on
the grave and covered with a basket. Now the *wanda* for the beer is carefully ground
and put to soak for fermenting. After twelve days the fermented *wanda* is roasted
and the next morning dried. Unground *wanda* is soaked in water, which is strained
off again, and the grain remains for 3 days in covered pots in order to sprout,
after which it is dried. When these ingredients are ready, then the next day another
visit is paid to the witchdoctor, who again orders a special chicken to be sacrificed,
this time e. g. a white one, which is killed and eaten in the morning. Now the
● [824 women and children of deceased only pick some *umbipala* of a certain wild plant
588] (*ombele*) which they string like beads on the stalk of creeping grass (*mwikuwa*).
These strings they put round their necks, and also round the necks of the water-
vessels with which they go to the well to fetch water for the further preparations of
the beer. The water is put out in the sun, and when it has become lukewarm, it
is poured on the fermented *wanda* in big earthen pots. Next day the sprouted
wanda is ground and put in the beer-pots too. The following morning early the
relations put some of the beer, now ready, in a small vessel, which they put on the
grave of deceased, with a reed in it, after which the people of the village take some
of the beer and drink it. Presently they bring a cock which they suspend by its legs
alive in the gateway of the kraal together with some secret medicine, and it remains
hanging there till sunset. From 8 o'clock in the morning onwards all the relations,
friends and neighbours come to partake of the beer, which is put in an enormous
earthen pot (*ndoka*) in an open space outside, each visitor bringing his own reed
for sucking the beer. Nobody can enter the kraal that day except by the gateway
where the chicken is hanging, all the other entrances being closed up. And the
chicken is hung in such a way that anyone entering has to touch it. Suppose a
[754] person with an "evil eye" would enter for the purpose of bewitching somebody there,
the medicine would start working on him, and he would leave the place with sore
eyes, which would cause him much suffering. If this person, however, returns to the
village, and owns up that he came there to bewitch somebody, he will be asked to
spit on the ground, so that the person bewitched may not die, and doing so his
eyes will heal again.

Beer is supplied to anybody entering the kraal for three days at a stretch.
No food is cooked these days; if some food is brought from a neighbouring village
they may take it but otherwise they live on beer only. All the children of round
about, born about the time of persons death and called after him are carried by
their mothers to this beer party. Each mother brings a cooked chicken and some

buttermilk is used for making gruel which can be consumed by both sexes. Both buttermilk and fresh milk are used for cooking vegetables and fresh bovine blood for human consumption. The Luo do not slaughter their cattle for beef except for some special reason, for example, on the occasion of a special feast. The ordinary meat eaten is that of animals which have died as a result of disease or accident. If there is an outbreak of a serious disease and many animals die, their meat is made into biltong which can be stored for future consumption. Such biltong forms a very palatable diet when properly cooked with ghee. Girls do not eat the meat of cattle paid for their dowries.

Hides are used as sleeping mats, and for making shields, drums, sandals and special head-dresses on which ostrich feathers are fixed. Those of very young animals are used as clothes.

Cattle can be exchanged for millet or maize at any time, i.e., during famine or in good years; but cattle-owners tend to refuse millet or maize for their cattle after good harvests. This is one of the facts which support the argument of the Luo elders who prefer animals to crops. In exchanging cattle for goats and sheep, a bull is worth three to four goats and a heifer, six to eight goats or sheep. A goat or sheep is worth six to eight fowls.

The young men use young oxen for riding, and they sell heifers to buy buffalo hides for making shields or ostrich feathers for their adornment at funeral dances. Cattle accompany the mourners when attending funerals and, during inter-tribal wars, oxen were the companions of warriors on the battlefield. The horns make valuable trumpets and are used as containers for keeping powdered drugs. Tendons make strong strings for harps and bows. Cattle dung is useful for smearing houses and dry dung is good for the fire. Fresh blood as mentioned above makes a palatable food when mixed with milk and cooked. The scapula of small animals is used as a butter-scoop and for other domestic purposes. Hoofs are used for storing drugs and for running liquid medicines into the noses of both human and animal patients, e.g., an infusion of a plant known in Luo as *jandaruni** is given in this way to cattle suffering from east coast fever. The long hair of the tail is used for trapping birds. The scrotum forms a valuable pocket.

Goats' milk is the food of the herd-boys when looking after animals in the pastures. They add the juice of a fruit† to the fresh milk and after a few minutes the milk coagulates and is ready for consumption. Goat skins are worn by both men and women and goat's meat is eaten by both sexes. The goat is the animal usually slaughtered for female visitors such as mothers and sisters-in-law. The chief produce from sheep is mutton

*Dolichos sp. probably *D. Maitlandii*.
†Solanum sp. probably *S. incanum*, Sodom apple.—Editor.

When a cow calves about two days are allowed to pass while the calf is suckled before milking commences. The milk obtained from the cow during the first two weeks or until the umbilical cord of the calf drops, is all drunk by young men in the village. This milk is stored in a pot in which a little buttermilk, which has been treated with urine, has been placed. As mentioned before the Luo believe that drinking fresh whole milk is the cause of tapeworm infestation, and the buttermilk is added to the fresh milk so as to eliminate this danger. When the umbilical cord of the calf has dropped the woman who owns the cow is allowed to use the milk for churning butter. The roots of a plant known in Luo as obuuo is added to the churning calabash as a preserving agent because fresh milk is stored in the calabash for about twelve to twenty-four hours before churning. During the churning process a little bovine urine, which has been stored for a few days, is added to the milk to accelerate the formation and facilitate the separation of the butter. This urine is also believed to be a good preservative for both the butter and the buttermilk, which will be stored for use in cooking various kinds of food. On the day the first butter is made into ghee, a little of the ghee is fed to the calf and the rest eaten by a group of people in the house. The reason why a sample of the first ghee is given to the calf is not very clear; but some people say that it protects the calf from developing diarrhoea and indigestion when the later butter of the dam is boiled and made into ghee. They believe that otherwise the boiling of the butter during ghee-making would cause diarrhoea in the calf.

Milking is done twice a day, in the morning and evening, by the boys and young men. Girls, women and old men are only allowed to milk in homes where there are no young men. Before commencing milking, the calf is allowed to suck its dam for a minute. It is then tied in front of the dam while she is milked. After some milk has been drawn the calf is allowed to suck for another minute and then re-tied while more milk is taken. Finally, the calf is allowed to suck and stay with the dam for about an hour, after which it is separated from the mother for at least ten hours before the next milking.

If a cow is slow to wean her calf a method used for drying her off is to fix a muzzle (osembo) on which strong thorns are fixed around the mouth of the calf so that when it tries to suck, the thorns prick the dam and cause her to kick the calf away. Another device is to smear the teats of the dam with cow dung, the taste of which stops the calf from sucking.

If the calf dies, its hide is dried, folded properly and a little salt solution is sprinkled on it to make it taste pleasant when licked by the dam while being milked. Before milking, the teats are washed or cleaned with warm water to stimulate the milk flow.

Black and white or red and white are favoured in oxen used as companions during funeral dances and other ceremonies. 231 232

Treatment of Animals.

Although the Luo are ignorant of the use of specific drugs for the treatment of different animal diseases, yet, when an animal is suffering they make keen attempts to cure it. As a result of such trials, cures have been reported in east coast fever, anthrax, blackquarter, mange, etc. Sometimes the treatment of one disease is so complicated that it is impossible to tell what agent may have been effective. It is clear that in some diseases animals may recover after empirical treatment. In the case of east coast fever, the treatment consists of cutting the ear, cauterising the glands and pouring into the nose a liquid infusion of a plant known in Luo as *ponderuri*.* This drug causes a great deal of sneezing and is, therefore, said to free the blocked-up and congested sinuses. It is generally believed that many animals are saved by the use of this drug. 232 239

The Luo believe that they cure blackquarter by bleeding and by cauterising the affected quarter or even the whole body. Nowadays, some people who can procure potassium permanganate make large incisions of the affected part and rub in crystals or a saturated solution of the drug. Mange in goats and dogs is cured by washing the animals with tobacco infusion and the urine of cattle which has been stored for a few days. There are several drugs which are believed to be quite effective in expelling retained foetal membranes. 278

It is quite certain that the Luo have no method of immunising animals against diseases.

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*See footnote to page 138.

19:Wilson E-5 (ca. 1950) 1960
FL11 Luo FL11

Finally, in desperation, his sons and a group of his *pakakuoro* consulted the head diviner, *jubilo*, to choose an auspicious day for the killing of the ex-chief and to collect the animals and materials necessary for cleansing after the deed had been accomplished.

The ex-chief was found and stabbed to death at the place named by the *jubilo* and his body was hidden in a nearby river. It was found several days later, and a witness was found who alleged that he came upon the group on the day of the murder in the act of disposing of the body.

Those who had had actual physical contact with the blood of the murdered man were cleansed as soon as they arrived home by the leading *jubilo* of the clan. He used a grey ash from burning the sacred *buowbuow* vine. The minimal lineage, *pakakuoro*, assembled at the village of the senior son, who was the head of the lineage segment, and who had struck the fatal blow. There the following cleansing ritual was performed: at about two o'clock the following afternoon, a black sheep and red chicken were slaughtered by the head of the lineage. The sheep and chicken were first prepared by the *jubilo*, who placed his medicines in the mouth of the sheep and of the chicken before the sacrifice. The *jubilo* cut strips of skin from the animal and wrapped them around the spear and knives used in the murder. The spear had to be destroyed at sundown because the victim was related to the spear clan of the tribe. The meat was divided on the lineage principle and consumed ceremonially. The meat of the chicken was eaten only by those who actually struck blows.

The purpose of these sacrifices was stated by the *jubilo* to "keep the spirit of the murdered man from doing evil to the clan." It also cleansed the bodies of those who drew blood so that they could now eat with their families and once more participate in the activities of the village and clan.

After the meat was eaten, those present held a meeting to decide which old woman should act as a wife to the ghost of

19:Wilson E-9 (ca. 1950) 1960
FL11 Luo FL11

762 159 [505] his mother and took the ox-ox by stealth. When the husband came to collect it for the Chief, he found that a large portion of it had disappeared. This caused a bitter quarrel between him and the boy's mother.

In fear of the consequences of what her son had done, the woman placed a rope, which was used for tying up one of her cows for milking, in a small basket and went out of the village as if to collect vegetables. She went to one of the largest trees in a nearby valley which was hidden from sight by thick bush and there hanged herself. My informant then described the scene as follows: "The first person who found the body cursed it very hard and, after having cut the rope, started mourning. The place was soon filled with people and some were asked [783] to bring hoes, axes, and pangas to destroy the tree. There and then people of the village and her lineage started their work and within a day the tree was completely destroyed and all the roots dug up from the ground and burned."

"When I asked why the tree was being destroyed," the informant went on, "the elders told me that it was being done to stop more people from hanging from it, for we Luo believe that hanging is inherited by different people in different clans. If a clan had not had a person hang himself before, it is difficult • [524] for one in that clan to hang himself or herself. If a tree on which someone had hanged himself was allowed to remain, it would drag other people to it for the same purpose."

The next case involves a curse as well as domestic trouble.

Suicide Case No. 17.

159 762 578 The husband of this suicide had been having considerable trouble with his cattle and many were dying from disease. The beginning of the illness coincided with the elopement of her daughter with a young man who had neither paid bride-wealth nor seemed likely to pay it. Her husband blamed his misfortunes on this incident and his suspicions were confirmed by

20:Ominde 1-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
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this place they make regular visits to it. Thus the place used by the children for this purpose appears very insanitary. Furthermore, children are in this way exposed to the danger of attack from worms of various kinds. 863

Weaning

There are very few cases where children are not weaned against their will. The maximum period of suckling is determined by the date of the following pregnancy. Thus if the mother is not again pregnant a child is suckled for as long as it wishes. It is considered that once a mother is expecting another child the milk in her breasts naturally belongs to the coming baby and would be poisonous to the older child. It is also believed that children who are suckled when their mothers are pregnant waste away and eventually die if the feeding is not stopped. 862

Methods of weaning. Methods of weaning do not vary much between different mothers. First, the child may be persuaded that the milk is 'pus', and as such should not be taken. Certain children are deliberately disgusted and are weaned immediately in this way.

The second method involves smearing with the bitter aloe sap, or a substance which irritates the mouth, like pepper. Much pain is inflicted on children weaned in this manner, and no doubt psychological studies of these children would bring to light the tremendous effects created by different methods of weaning. [824]

Another method used is that of discouragement through fright. A mother may play on the sensory nerves of the child's face at night by touching it with grass, telling the nursing child that the grass is a caterpillar. As children are afraid of caterpillars this greatly upsets them, and the mother succeeds in severing the last physiological connection between herself and her [825]